



Update: Public Health Message Regarding Florida Anthrax Case

October 7, 2001

- The ongoing investigation of anthrax in Florida has detected evidence that the bacterium that causes anthrax, (*Bacillus anthracis*) may be present in the building where the patient who died of anthrax worked.
- *B. anthracis* was identified in one nasal sample from another worker in the building, which suggests exposure. No other workers are known to have illness consistent with anthrax.
- One of many samples collected from the workplace environment contains *B. anthracis*. Final results on the other environmental samples will not be available for several days. In the meantime, public health officials, in cooperation with the company, have secured the building.
- The current risk of anthrax among employees and visitors to the building is extremely low. However, as a preventive measure, public health officials have begun to contact personnel who worked in the building since August 1, 2001, to provide antibiotics. Antibiotic treatment before symptoms occur will prevent anthrax. The incubation period from exposure to onset of illness with anthrax is usually 1-7 days, but may be as long as 60 days.
- Symptoms of inhalational anthrax include fever, muscle aches, and fatigue that rapidly progress to severe systemic illness. Workers who develop such symptoms will be advised to seek immediate medical attention for further evaluation.
- Anthrax is NOT contagious from one person to another. Family members and contacts of persons who work in or visited the building are not at risk and antibiotic therapy is not recommended for them. Other members of the community are not at risk. Public health officials, together with the FBI, are continuing the investigation.
- For more information regarding this public health action in Florida, after 7 a.m., Monday, October 8, call: 1 800 342-3557
- Media: Florida contact: 561 712-6400; CDC, pager 404 318-2380.